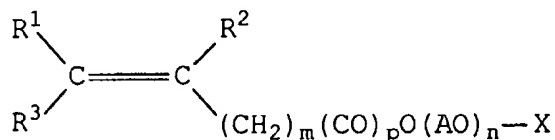


AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the present application.

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A powdery dispersant for a hydraulic composition, said powdery dispersant comprising at least one copolymer, wherein said copolymer is made by polymerizing at least one vinyl monomer (a) represented by the formula (1):



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(1)
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wherein R^1 and R^2 represent a hydrogen atom or a methyl group, R^3 represents a hydrogen atom or $-\text{COO}(\text{AO})_n\text{X}$, m is a number of 0 to 2, p is a number of 0 or 1, AO represents a C_{2-4} oxyalkylene group or an oxystyrene group, n is the average mole number of AO groups and is a number of 2 to 300, and X represents a hydrogen atom or a C_{1-18} alkyl group;

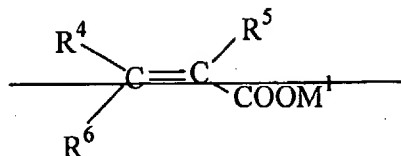
with at least one vinyl monomer (b) selected from the group consisting of acrylic acid, methacrylic acid, an alkaline earth metal salt of acrylic acid, an alkaline earth metal salt of methacrylic acid and maleic anhydride; represented by the formula (2):

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-(2)-

~~wherein R^4 , R^5 and R^6 are the same as or different from one another and each represent a hydrogen atom, a methyl group or $(\text{CH}_2)_{m_1}\text{COOM}^2$ wherein $(\text{CH}_2)_{m_1}\text{COOM}^2$ is optionally combined with COOM^1 or another $(\text{CH}_2)_{m_1}\text{COOM}^2$ to produce an anhydride so that M^1 and M^2 of these groups are not present, M^1 and M^2 represent a hydrogen atom or a polyvalent metal, and m_1 is a number of 0 to 2,~~

wherein the average mole number of C_{2-4} oxyalkylene groups or oxystyrene groups of said copolymer is 45 to 150;

$(a)/[(a) + (b)] \times 100$ ranges from 15 to 45 (mole%); and

at least part of the copolymer is a ~~polyvalent~~ alkaline earth metal salt.

2. (Original) The powdery dispersant according to claim 1, wherein $(a)/[(a) + (b)] \times 100$ ranges from 20 to 35 mole%.

3-4. (Canceled)

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5. (Previously Presented) The powdery dispersant according to claim 1, wherein the average mole number of C₂₋₄ oxyalkylene groups or oxystyrene groups of said copolymer is 60 to 130.

6. (Previously Presented) The powdery dispersant according to claim 1, wherein the average mole number of C₂₋₄ oxyalkylene groups or oxystyrene groups of said copolymer is 60 to 115.

7. (Original) The powdery dispersant according to claim 1, wherein all the copolymers are polyvalent metal salts in part.

8. (Currently Amended) The powdery dispersant according to claim 1, ~~or 3,~~ which comprises a copolymer obtained from starting monomers containing 98 to 100 % by weight of the monomers (a) and (b).

9. (Currently Amended) The powdery dispersant according to claim 1, ~~or 3,~~ which comprises 50 to 100 % by weight of dispersant particles whose diameter is 500 µm or less.

10. (Withdrawn) A hydraulic composition comprising the powdery dispersant described in claim 1 or 3 and a hydraulic composition.

11. (Canceled)

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12. (Withdrawn) A method of dispersing a hydraulic composition by the powdery dispersant described in claim 1 or 3.

13. (Canceled)

14. (Previously Presented) The powdery dispersant for a hydraulic composition of claim 1, wherein AO of said vinyl monomer (a) is an oxystyrene group.

15. (Currently Amended) The powdery dispersant for a hydraulic composition of claim 1, wherein said at least one vinyl monomer (b) is ~~selected from the group consisting of (meth)acrylic acid, a salt thereof and maleic anhydride.~~ the alkaline earth metal salt of methacrylic acid or maleic anhydride.

16. (Canceled)

17. (Currently Amended) The powdery dispersant for a hydraulic composition of claim ~~16~~, 1, wherein the vinyl monomer (b) is an alkaline earth metal salt of (meth)acrylic acid.

18-20. (Canceled)